

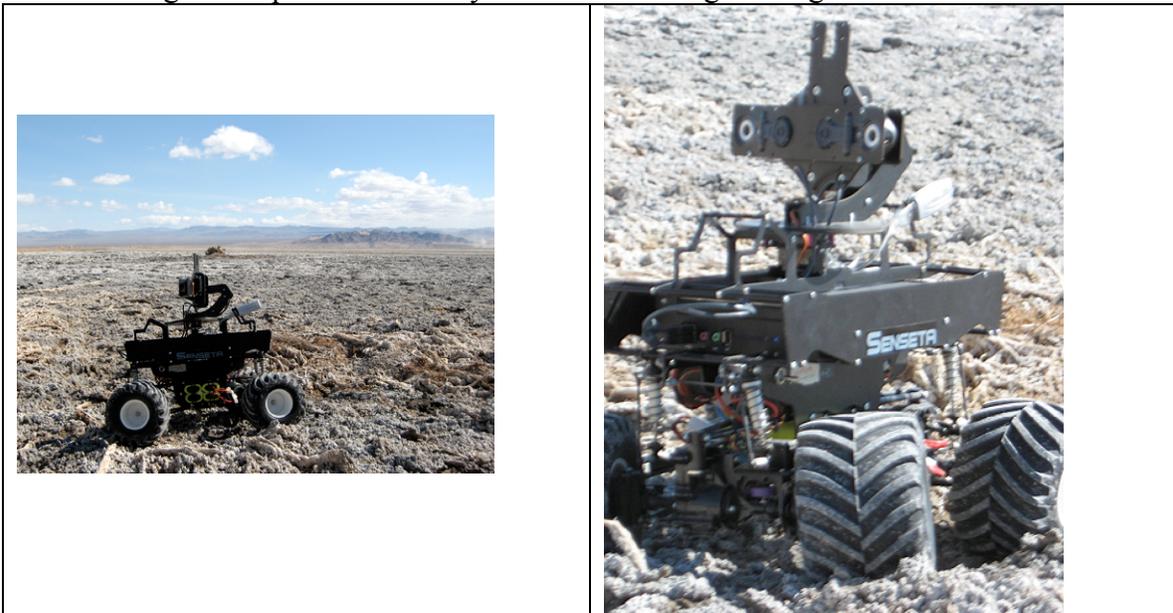
## NASA Spaceward Bound 2007: The Mojave Expedition

Blogger: Dan Wray, NEAT, Science Teacher, Lakeview Middle School, Indiana

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

What a great day! There are many wonderful memories and potential opportunities that will grow out of today's experiences. I will share three of them with you.

1. I started the day with a morning session in rover robotics. The roverbot is pretty intricate and the interface is difficult to fully appreciate in short order. Nevertheless, the goal was to operate the robot remotely and to seek and approach specific targets. The technology worked flawlessly and I felt that I had some aptitude for "handling" the robot. I will be writing grant proposals in order to bring this experience into my Robotics and Engineering course at school.



2. In the afternoon, I trekked through the Afton Canyon in the Mojave Desert. Though the geology of the area is still in debate, the Grandeur of the area certainly transcended the scientific and allowed this scientist to simply appreciate Nature without the encumbrances of knowledge or study. I realized that the poet and the artist have a valuable point of view and that the science must not always overwhelm the appreciation and majesty of the grand beauty we can find around us.
3. In a simple meeting of scientists and teachers, something truly amazing happened; people shared techniques and hypotheses and preliminary results with one another in a large group and *energy* filled the air. The enthusiasm of discovery and of wonder enveloped the main hall at Zzyzx in a way that I fear is missing from many endeavors outside of science. In that hour, I witnessed a rare sight. It was knowledge and speculation for the purpose of understanding. There was excitement for many wonderful reasons – too uncommon in my experience – and it was delightful.